

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 06729 251150Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----112347 251151Z /64
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3320
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6729

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US, EG
SUBJ: CLARIFICATION OF DAYAN KNESSET REMARKS

REF: TEL AVIV 6711

1. I SPOKE WITH EVRON THIS MORNING IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE SOME SENSE OF DAYAN'S KNESSET REMARKS (REFTEL) YESTERDAY
2. EVRON CONFIRMED THAT AT LEAST IN REGARDS TO THE "DOCUMENT" REFERENCE, DAYAN HAD SIMPLY MISSPOKEN. EVRON SOUGHT TO MINIMIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF DAYAN'S SLIP, ARGUING THAT IT MERELY CONFUSED THE FORM BUT NOT THE CONTENT OF A COMMUNICATION.
3. EVRON EXPLAINED THAT DAYAN'S HARSH CHARACTERIZATION OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF THE IMMEDIATE PARLIAMENTARY CONTEXT IN WHICH IT WAS MADE. HE WAS RESPONDING TO PERES' SHARP CRITIQUE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PEACE POLICY, IN WHICH THE OPPOSITION LEADER DESCRIBED AN EXCEPTIONALLY FORTHCOMING EGYPTIAN POSITION. EVRON SAID THAT IN RESPONDING TO PERES' GOADING ON EGYPTIAN FLEXIBILITY, DAYAN JUST LET GO.

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4. ACCORDING TO EVRON, DAYAN'S REFERENCE TO THE U.S. RETURNING AN "IMPOSSIBLE" EGYPTIAN COUNTER-PROPOSAL TO SADAT WAS BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED THE GOI BY SOURCES HE WOULD NOT DIVULGE BUT WERE BY IMPLICATION CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON.

5. EVRON'S EXPLANATION IS A PLAUSIBLE ONE FOR A STILL-

BAFFLING DAYAN PERFORMANCE. WHILE IT DOESN'T MAKE HIS REMARKS ANY MORE PALATABLE, THEIR ATTRIBUTION TO CONFUSION AND THOUGHTLESSNESS IN THE HEAT OF REBUTTAL COULD WELL BE TRUE.

6. THERE IS HOWEVER, A MORE OMINOUS POSSIBILITY. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT BEGIN AND DAYAN HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ANSWER OUR TWO QUESTIONS POSITIVELY. THE TWO OF THEM WERE CONFERRING TOGETHER IN THE KNESSET FOR TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE DAYAN GOT UP TO SPEAK, AND THEY MAY HAVE CONCEIVED DAYAN'S REMARKS AS A FIRST STEP IN ATTEMPTING TO SHIFT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A STALEMATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO SADAT'S SHOULDERS. BUT THIS IS PURE SPECULATION ON OUR PART.

7. IN ANY EVENT, PERES' CALL FOR A KNESSET DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY AND HIS ATTACK YESTERDAY ON THE GOVERNMENT SEEM TO HAVE PUSHED BEGIN AND COMPANY INTO TAKING THE INITIATIVE WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE EGYPTIAN "ANSWERS" TO ISRAELI QUESTIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THIS SUNDAY'S CABINET MEETING. THERE ARE ALSO PRESS REPORTS THAT THE MEETING WILL ADDRESS THE U.S. QUESTIONS POSED TO ISRAEL. WE WILL BE STANDING BY.

8. WE WILL BE RECEIVING IN A FEW HOURS THE FULL TEXT OF THE
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PERES-DAYAN EXCHANGE AND WILL REPORT FURTHER IF ANYTHING NEW COMES TO LIGHT.
LEWIS

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NNN

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